

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOLUME IX. No. 25

THE BEACON PRESS, BOSTON, MASS.

MARCH 23, 1919



THE LIGHTHOUSE IN THE DUCK-POND BY MABEL S. MERRILL.

Drawing by Josephine Bruce.

Chapter One.

PETER KERR stood on the low wooden step at the front door of the old house and forgot to whistle as he looked up and down. Ellen gazed blankly over his shoulder, and the two little ones, Spud and June, thrust their heads out, one under either of his arms.

"Why, it's just a street," complained Ellen, "and it was streets we got so tired of at home. Didn't you think a place named 'Applebush' would turn out to be country?"

Peter began, to whistle. "What's the odds? Anyway, we knew it was a little bit of a village because Uncle Roger said so in his letter when he invited us to come. I guess it's good enough for the likes of us."

"Peter Kerr, you know you wanted to farm it," urged Ellen.

"I thought we'd have a red cow named Buttercup," added Spud.

"I think it's real silly to call a place Applebush," sniffed June. "Apples don't grow on bushes—I should s'pose anybody'd know that."

Peter put a hand under each round chin. "No growling," he said. "Didn't we agree it was pretty good of Uncle Roger and Aunt Deb to let us come when they're old and tired and can't stand much of a racket? What we're going to do is to put a good face on it and not be a lot of dubs."

"What's a dub?" asked June. "Say, I hear the funniest noise, like auto horns going off at each other every minute."

"It's ducks," cried Peter as he stopped to listen. "Must be somebody near that keeps poultry; that's some fun, anyhow. Let's go and peek out the back door."

The four Kerrs were looking over the old house where they were to live for at least a year while their father and mother were in Florida. Great-uncle Roger and his wife were old and feeble to take charge of such a family, but they had declared their readiness to give the children a home if they were the kind of youngsters that could look out for themselves. So here they were, trying to find some way of passing this first long afternoon in the new home. It was the middle of June and they would not begin school until fall, as the end of the term was so near.

There was a wide hall running from front to back of the old house, and it took but a minute to reach the back door and crowd out on the low doorstep. There was only a narrow grassy strip of garden ground surrounded by a tumbledown picket fence. Looking over the fence at one end they discovered the duck-pond and ran eagerly to look at it. It was a good-sized pond lying in a hollow between two gardens. Glancing across the water they could look right into the back porch of a house much finer than this old one of Uncle Roger's. It faced on another street which ran up a hill at right angles to their street. But they hardly noticed the house because there was something more interesting to see.

In the middle of the pond was a tiny island covered with bushes, and over the tops of the bushes they could see a little peaked roof like the roof of a summer-house.

"Do you suppose somebody lives there?" asked Spud, earnestly. "Because if they don't, maybe they'd let us rent it for the

summer. I always wanted to live on an island."

"It's about big enough for a couple of ducks to keep house in," observed Peter. "But we'll have a look at it before many days. What I want to find now is that acre of land Uncle Roger said he owned besides his house-lot. It must be over this way. I know it's close by."

He led them to the other end of the garden, where a great clump of old lilacs hid the fence. A path wound into the middle of the clump, and following it they came to a gap in the fence. Beyond the gap lay Uncle Roger's acre, and Peter's hopes of "farming it" sank low as he looked. The whole piece of ground was a dense jungle of alder bushes, chokecherry, and wild clematis vine.

"It'll be a good place to play 'Injun,' anyhow," suggested Spud. "A fellow could cut down trees and build a wigwam!"

He tumbled backwards into the bushes as something shot between his feet. A white flash went scouring away into the jungle while they stood and stared.

"It's a pig," pronounced Peter,—"a little one. Where'd you suppose he appeared from? Uncle Roger doesn't keep a pig."

"He must have run away from somebody," declared Ellen. "We ought to keep him in sight if we can. A little fellow like that would get lost easy enough."

They made their way into the jungle, twisting and turning and worming their way through the bushes. In a few minutes they caught sight of the pig standing under a clump of ferns as if considering what to do next. When he saw them coming he uttered a startled "Woof!" and went twinkling off through the underbrush till suddenly he vanished. Following hard on his trail, they were brought up short by a stone wall, and a stone wall in the middle of a jungle seemed so out of place that they stopped to look it over.

"It's higher than a man's head," observed Peter, looking up to the vine-covered top of the wall. "Seems 'most like the outside of some building with no roof on it. Look, here's where a door or gate used to be."

They stepped through the opening in the wall and looked around the place in surprise. It was a circular grassy enclosure where the bushes had not grown up as they had outside. The wall looked very strong and very old, and it was hard to imagine what it could ever have been built for.

"I believe I know," exclaimed Peter. "I've read about 'em. It's what they used to call a pound, where the town shut up stray cattle till their owners came and took them away and paid for the damage they had done. Well, say, I don't believe any frisky heifer ever jumped out of this place!"

"There's the pig!" cried Spud, pointing to the runaway hiding in a clump of weeds. "Now we've got him if we don't let him scoot back through the gate."

"We'll shut him in and leave him here till his owner comes looking for him," announced Peter. "That's what a pound is for, and I saw the old gate lying in the bushes."

They got the gate back into place and put a board across the bottom of it to keep the small fellow from squeezing out between the bars. Then they went back to the garden to see if any pig-owner had come looking for his property. As they came out of the path through the lilacs they stopped and rubbed their eyes, for in the middle of the garden stood a little pig. For a moment they thought it was the same one they had left in the pound; then they saw that this second pig had a blue ribbon around his neck.

"The other one didn't have any hair ribbons on," said June, "and here's a big girl."

The big girl was just coming across the garden and she was holding out her hand to the pig.

"Come here, Silverskin," she coaxed. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself to jump out of that cunning little pen I made for you. Oh, do head him off, please!"

The pig had tried to dart past the Kerrs and get away into the lilac bushes. But all four made a dash at him and Peter got him by one leg.

"Oh, I'm so much obliged to you," cried the girl, as she pulled off a pink gingham apron and muffled the pig in it till he looked something like a middling-sized doll, or a baby in long clothes. "I can't hold him any other way, he's so slippery," she explained. "Did you see Spillikins?—that's the other one."

"We've got one shut up in the pound," Peter was beginning, when around the corner of the house came racing a third pig. He had come from the street out in front, and after him came a long-legged lad of fifteen in hot pursuit.

This time it was little June who caught the runaway by plumping down right in his path with her short skirts spread out. The long-legged boy gasped his thanks as he tucked his pig under his arm.

"I put him in the henyard," he explained, "and he went through the wire like a caterpillar tractor. I guess you've got us all into a scrape, Cap'n Una, by making us buy pigs when we hadn't any place to put 'em."

By "Captain Una" he seemed to mean the girl who stood holding her pig in the pink apron.

"I didn't make anybody buy pigs, Bennie Shaw," she retorted. "I knew everybody would want one after they'd heard that lecturer from the Agricultural College, so I telephoned to Uncle Amos Roberts that he could probably sell some if he brought over a load of little ones from his stock farm, so he did. How's the dressmaker getting on with hers?"

"Fine! She put him in a barrel out in the back yard, and he tipped it over into a mud-puddle first thing. I helped her fish him out and she lost her thimble and her tape measure and I had to rake for them in the puddle. But she says that when Olive gets home she will be more pleased with that little pig than she would with a wax doll." Ben delivered all this with a solemn air as he squeezed his pig under his arm.

"Olive Brown is the dressmaker's little lame niece, and the pig is to be a surprise for her when she comes back from a visit to Nutmeg Hill," explained Captain Una,

taking no notice of Ben's wink at the other four. "Why, who's this?"

It was a discouraged-looking man who carried a basket out of which a small and muddy pig was trying to squirm in spite of the hand that was holding him down.

"Well, there!" complained the man, "I don't know what I'm going to do with this pig. Ella wouldn't take a mite of comfort till I'd bought her one, and now nobody in the neighborhood is takin' any comfort. I hadn't any place to put him, so I shut him up in the dog-house, and the critter ripped off a board, first thing I knew, and was helping himself to a squash pie Miss Jenness had set out to cool on her back porch. Course she took after him with the broom, and I had to chase him into half the holes and corners in the village."

"Well, look here," spoke up Peter, "if you've all got pigs and no place to put them I'm going to ask Uncle Roger why you can't have the pound for a community pig-pen."

He ran into the house to ask the question and was soon back again to tell them that Uncle Roger was entirely willing. They all went to look at the enclosure in the jungle and all agreed that it would be an ideal place for pigs. The man and the boy promised to come to-morrow morning and mend the gate and cut a path through the jungle. They could build a shelter of boards inside for the pigs to stay under at night or in stormy weather.

"I'll tell you what," cried Captain Una, "you must have a pig of your own, and the rest of us that keep ours here will bring enough for yours to eat. Your pig can sort of take the others for lodgers, don't you see, and live on the rent they pay."

This plan pleased the four Kerrs so well that they immediately put their pocket money together and were delighted to find that it would just buy a little pig from the stock farm.

"Good-by," said Captain Una, when all these things were settled. "You'll see me in the morning. I live right here"—pointing to the handsome house they had noticed the other side of the duck-pond. "My name is really Una—Una Linford. The captain part is a pack of rubbish that folks have made up to go with it. Louis Trevor put it into their heads—they say I like to run things, you know. Well, what if I do, as long as I run them right? and anyhow, it's none of Louis Trevor's business."

"Kind of smart and spicy," commented Peter, as Captain Una whisked off down the street. "I don't mind that myself, but some would. Come on in, Aunt Deb says supper's ready."

They forgot to look again at the little peaked roof on the island in the duck-pond before they went to bed. But in the small hours of the night Peter was awakened by a little figure in white which stood by his bed and spoke in a hollow whisper:

"Just you get up, Peter Kerr, and let me show you something out of this window. And it's two o'clock in the morning this minute."

The older brother crawled out sleepily and looked from the window where Spud was pointing. The little peaked roof in the middle of the duck-pond showed very plainly, for it was all a blaze of light from what looked like a big lantern in a kind of cupola on top. And a dark figure on hands and knees was crawling about on the roof as stealthily as a cat.

(To be continued.)

The Secret.

THE south wind told the brooklet,

As over the field he blew;

The brooklet told the rushes,

Who whispered it to the dew;

The dewdrops told the robin

(Who never could keep a thing!)—

He perched all day on a blossoming spray

And warbled, "It's spring! It's spring!"

St. Nicholas.

Why the Alligator called so Early.

BY CHARLES N. SINNETT.

MABEL tripped down the garden path with an anxious look on her face. She hoped that some of the choice roses had fully opened. Her favorite teacher was to take breakfast with her. She knew how full of joy her dark eyes would be when she saw a fragrant bouquet beside her plate.

Just as she was bending over the rosebush Mabel gave a slight start. Then she pressed both her hands over her mouth to thrust back the merry peals of laughter. Just down the path was Mr. White's pet alligator. He tried to stand as high as he could on his funny little legs. When he saw Mabel his mouth opened quite wide and he bobbed his head up and down as he did when his owner was stroking him under his chin.

"He's glad to see me," thought Mabel. "But I don't understand how he ever got through that thick wire of his pen. And he surely wasn't hungry. Mr. White drops his work at any hour in the day to get him minnows, or whatever he best likes to eat. I must let him know that his pet is here."

Mabel had just gone through the gate when her father came to the door. His garden was so precious to him that the people often said he would miss the smallest blossom from his syringe. He at once saw the alligator. He was sure that he had crawled over his cucumber bed. He caught up a broom and hurried to urge his visitor into a broader part of the walk. But the alligator hissed at him, and snapped at the broom.

"I can get him into the clothes basket by pushing him a little," said Mr. Doty. But when he tipped this funny trap down on its side close to his visitor's head he wheeled around with his nose perilously near the onion bed.

"Oh, papa, you don't understand Babe!" Mabel came around the corner of the house, with Mr. White panting after her.

"Babe! I should think Spitfire would be a better name."

Mr. Doty stamped on the ground. In turning his head at the sound of the girl's voice the alligator had struck a tender onion stem. He took a couple of steps to straighten it up and then stood still. "Spitfire!" he said again.

Mabel stooped over a large dahlia. From under its shade she lifted a pail. She tapped merrily on its side as she hurried to Babe. The alligator lifted his head with what Mr. White called "one of his broad smiles." He met his friend in the middle of the walk. His mouth had seemed to be wide open before. But when Mabel lifted a handful of minnows from the water in the pail his jaws seemed to widen several inches. He did not snap at the fish. He took them carefully and held them in his mouth a minute or two as if getting all the good taste he could from them.

"You had saved those minnies to go fishing with—to Big Rock," protested Mr. Doty. "You can't get any more at this time in the day."

"She likes him," panted Mr. White. "And—and—he likes—her. I guess he saw her carrying those minnies by yesterday. Yes—Babe sees—all—that's going on. He didn't mean to steal them, either."

Just as Mr. White was lifting up the alligator, Mabel's teacher came out on the porch.

"Oh," she said, "how easily he can take him up. He seems as gentle as a kitten with him."

"Been—used to—me—long time," said Mr. White.

Babe finished the last minnow and looked at the teacher.

"See him try to bow to you," laughed Mabel. "It's a little wilted, like Daddy's onion plant over there,—but he means it. Oh, say, I know why he got out of his pen

and came over here. He was sorry he hissed at you when you put out your parasol at him yesterday. Don't that look just like the 'pology bow' some of the scholars make when they've been naughty?"

"Just like it," smiled the teacher. She bowed politely to Babe, as Mr. White turned to carry his pet home. "You've told me so much about how his master holds him on his knees. I shall not take my parasol when I go to see him again. And I'll see to it that the scholars do not tease him."

"He ain't made no 'pologies to me," grunted Mr. Doty, from the onion bed. "And them spitfires can smell minnies a mile off. Mabel may be good at translatin' Latin, but when it comes to alligator talk she's up agin it. Well, never mind; she's a good-natured girl; everybody likes her; life wouldn't be worth while if she wasn't here to pet animals. Probably that critter won't get out agin to trample all over my onion beds."

Betty and Her Pets.

BY VIVA CLARK.

5. "PHEZZIE."

NOW I'll give you three guesses about the next pet Betty had. No, not a poodle-dog; she already had Rick, the collie. No, not a squirrel, though she did have a squirrel later; I'll tell you about that sometime. No, not goldfish. I thought you wouldn't guess. Well, it was going to be birds. Now can you tell? Eggs, that's it. Daddy brought thirteen pheasant's eggs to be hatched under one of the bantams—you knew Betty had some bantams, didn't you? You didn't? Yes, indeed, six little brown hens and one gaudy, saucy rooster.

If you never saw a pheasant, you've seen pictures of them. This kind of a pheasant is a great gleaming golden bird with a very long olive-brown tail, a shining dark-green neck with a white ring about it, bright red skin round the eyes, and green tufts of feathers on each side of his head. His legs are long and have spurs, and his beak is large and powerful. When she saw the pointed olive-green eggs, Betty thought how wonderful it would be to have a whole flock of these handsome birds.

There was one bantam who was so anxious to have a family that she had already been sitting on a china egg for a week. Betty put her in a nice box in a sunny corner, with the thirteen eggs under her. Not an egg hatched. Daddy bought some more and Betty set them under another bantam, but they didn't hatch either. Once more they tried, and this time one egg chipped and a brown, homely little bird was all there was to show from the thirty-nine eggs.

Daddy built a tiny house with a wire-covered yard for the little hen and her charge—"Phezzie" she called him—right outside Betty's sleeping-porch, and she took excellent care of him. He was the most fussy little bird you could imagine; he wouldn't eat the things ordinary baby birds eat. He had to have—what do you think? Baked custard! Yes, sir! Regular milk-and-egg custard, baked in the oven. And after he got bigger, he could have bread soaked in warm milk. Betty said she felt like a real hospital nurse taking care of a patient.

He was very lively for a patient, though; he wouldn't stay with his foster mother if he could help it. One day he found a hole in his wire and ran away in the tall grass. The poor bantam was nearly crazy. She clucked and she scolded and ran back and forth, but Phezzie wouldn't look at her. He wandered farther and farther until Betty came to call upon him and found him gone. This was the way she found him. Whenever he moved, the tops of the tall grasses waved over his head and she knew he was underneath.

Another time he got out, and, unfortunately, Tom saw him, and thought the little tender bird would make a fine meal for him. Phezzie saw the cat coming and ran straight for the woodpile, crawled into a chink between the ends of two sticks, and kept very still. Tom looked and looked, but never a sign of Phezzie did he see, for the little bird was just the color of the wood. Betty was sure he went in there on that account. Perhaps he did.



My Fairy Pool.

BY ANNE P. L. LLOYD

I KNOW a fairy pool
So sweet and cool,
It's hidden safe away,
And every day
I visit it when I return from school!

Deep in the fleur-de-lis
I kneel and see
Upon the lily-pads
The queerest lads
Who dance about like butterflies for me!

And if I stay quite still
I hear a shrill,
Faint little misty tune
That echoes soon—
It sounds just like a fairy whip-poor-will!

Now please don't ever tell,
For I know well
If grown-folks knew by chance
Where fairies dance,
They'd want to see—and that would break
the spell!



THE BEACON CLUB

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.



Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Beacon Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

32 CHURCH STREET,
DORCHESTER, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck.—I would like to wear a Beacon Club button very much. I go to the First Parish Church.

I read *The Beacon* every Sunday. I like it very much. Our minister's name is Rev. Harry F. Burns. My teacher's name is Miss Hooke. I like her very much. I go to the Camp Fire Girls' meeting every Thursday. I am nine years old.

EVELYN PETERSON.

120 CHESTNUT STREET,
RUTHERFORD, N.J.

Dear Miss Buck.—My father was the minister in Detroit until he came to New York to do war work. We go to the Unitarian Sunday school of Rutherford and I expect to receive my first pin for perfect attendance in March.

I have two brothers and one sister, and my youngest brother and I would like to belong to the Beacon Club and wear its button. He is nine years old and I am thirteen.

I think *The Beacon* is a lovely paper, and I read the stories aloud. I enjoy it very much myself.

I am enclosing some twisted cities that I hope will be printed.

Your devoted readers,
RODMAN and SYLVIA SHIPPEN.

The Robin's Mistake.

BY MARTHA B. THOMAS.

HE made a mistake;
He wakened too soon;
His brain was befuddled
Because of the moon.

But he caroled away
As if it were day,
The cuddliest, cosiest sort of a tune.

He made a mistake.
From some swaying height
He poured forth his song
Of bubbling delight.
He warbled and trilled
And his hearers were filled
With joy that he made a mistake in the night.

A League of Nations.

BY THE EDITOR.

ALL our readers, even the boys and girls, know that President Wilson is leading the world in forming a League of Nations. It is not now "Hands across the sea" only, it is "Hands all round" for the nations of the world.

We are all together building a house of friendship. The peoples mean from this time forth to be just to each other, kind, friendly, trying to understand each other. When the League of Nations is established, as it will be, it will help to do away with war.

Many people have been hearing in the weeks just passed the fine addresses in which, all over our land, Judge William Howard Taft has pleaded that every one try to understand and stand for the League of Nations. Boys and girls may wear the button, a white star on a blue ground, to show their interest. Our Beacon Club button will be proud of so worthy a companion.

Shall we pledge our loyalty to the greatest ideals of national and international justice, liberty, and democracy in these words?

I will be loyal to my country, and will give to it the service of a good citizen.

I will be loyal to the League of Nations, and will give to all mankind the service due from a citizen of the world.

RECREATION CORNER.

ENIGMA XLIX.

I am composed of fourteen letters.
My 6, 5, 4, is a small animal.
My 4, 3, 2, 6, 7, 8, 14, is put upon the wall.
My 12, 2, 3, 10, 8, 9, is a precious stone.
My 6, 5, 4, is a small animal.
My 1, 5, 3, 4, 2, 10, is worn by Arabs.
My 13, 11, 10, 12, 8, is used on a door.
My whole was an annual event in Maine.

HUGH FARNSWORTH.

ENIGMA L.

I am composed of nine letters, and my whole is what you get in February.
My 3, 7, 5, 9, is to hang clothes on.
My 4, 2, 6, is what you do at the table.
My 1, 2, 8, 4, is to tell which way the wind blows.

ROBERT FRANKLIN WILKINSON.

ENIGMA LI.

I am composed of seven letters.
My 1, 2, 3, is what a boy wears.
My 1, 2, 4, is an animal.
My 1, 2, 7, is what the Kaiser should be in.
My 1, 5, 6, 7, is a murderer.
My 3, 5, 7, is a kitchen utensil.
My whole is a rank in the French army.

EDWARD A. MEVAS.

CHARADE.

My first is a noble animal.
My second is lord of creation.
My third is a vessel.
My whole is an art.

CAROLYN GEBHARDT.

TWISTED CITIES.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. Ottidre. | 6. Mielbo. |
| 2. Asn Iofenarcs. | 7. Rpdntaal. |
| 3. Opvederein. | 8. Ofuafbl. |
| 4. Lorbameit. | 9. Htdnuul. |
| 5. Lvgtsaeno. | 10. Noobts. |

SYLVIA SHIPPEN.

HIDDEN FRUITS.

1. Get up, each one of you.
2. The hole, Montgomery, the hole!
3. Sit in my lap, please.
4. Ned ate sweet potatoes for supper.
5. He doesn't appear to like it.
6. The Pluto range is the best.
7. Peg, rap especially hard.
8. Melba, Nan, and Peggy may go to town.

RICHARD WILLIS.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 23.

ENIGMA XLV.—Be natural, be sharp, and do not be flat.

ENIGMA XLVI.—General Foch.

ANAGRAMS.—I. Tractors. II. Trolley Cars.

III. Armored Tanks.

TWISTED AUTHORS.—1. Alcott. 2. Seton. 3. Lytton. 4. Stowe. 5. Dodge. 6. Warner. 7. Baldwin. 8. Dickens.

THE BEACON

REV. FLORENCE BUCK, EDITOR

Issued weekly from the first Sunday of October to the first Sunday of June, inclusive

PUBLISHED BY

The BEACON PRESS, Inc.

25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.

May also be secured from

104 E. 20th St., New York
105 S. Dearborn St., Chicago
162 Post St., San Francisco

Subscription Price: Single subscriptions, 60 cents. In packages to schools, 50 cents.



Entered at the Boston Post-office as second-class mail matter.

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on September 13, 1918.

GEO. H. ELLIS CO., PRINTERS, BOSTON

Morning Prayer.

BY VLYN JOHNSON.

DEAR Heavenly Father, by my bed

I kneel in morning prayer,
To ask that you through every hour
Will give me loving care.

And then, dear God, I also pray

That when mistakes I make,
I'll feel that you are always near

To children's hearts that ache.

So that I need not be afraid

At any hour to pray,

Since you who love us all the time

Are never far away.